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JULY 1973

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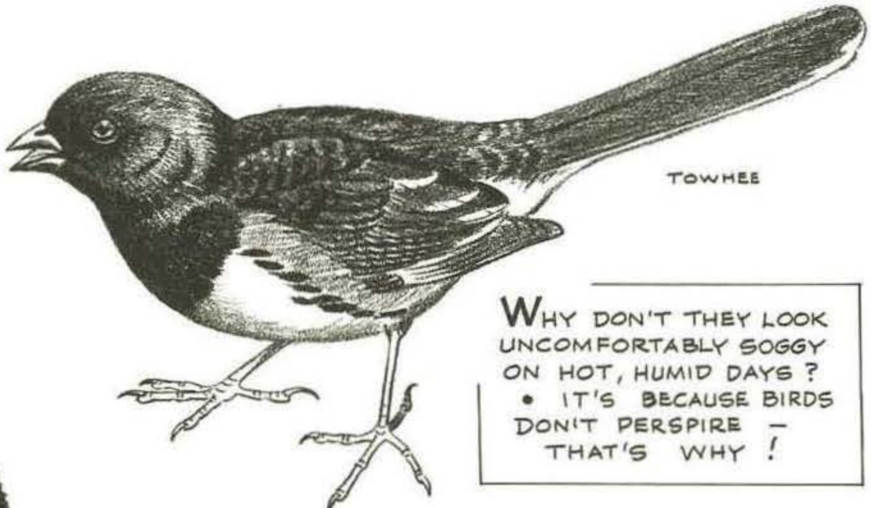
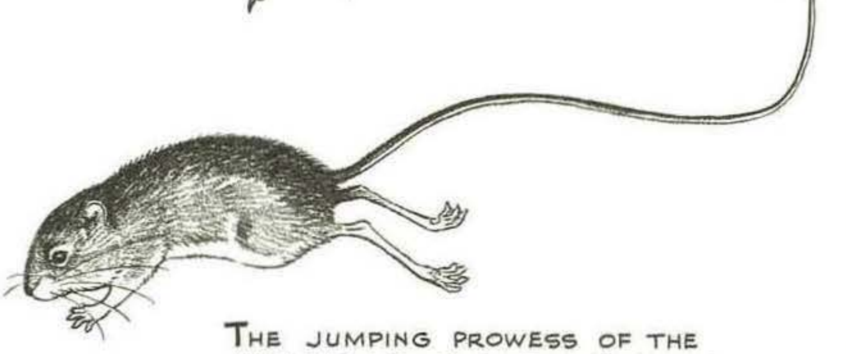
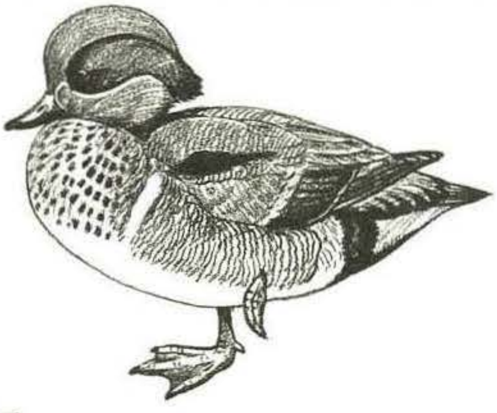


WHY DON'T THEY LOOK UNCOMFORTABLY SOGGY ON HOT, HUMID DAYS? • IT'S BECAUSE BIRDS DON'T PERSPIRE — THAT'S WHY!



THE JUMPING PROWESS OF THE JUMPING MOUSE SOMETIMES GETS IT INTO TROUBLE • NEARSIGHTED - IT CAN JUMP FARTHER THAN IT CAN SEE

NORMAL LIFE SPAN OF THE BLACK BEAR IN THE WILD IS 12 TO 15 YEARS • WELL CARED FOR INDIVIDUALS IN CAPTIVITY MAY LIVE TO 30 YEARS OLD



THE DARTING, ERRATIC FLIGHT OF THE GREEN-WINGED TEAL, ONE OF OUR SMALLEST DUCKS, MAKES ITS SPEED DECEPTIVE • ITS SPEED OF 50 MPH IS SLOW COMPARED TO THE CANVASBACK'S 70 MPH

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The Cover

An unobtrusive, trusting friend of farmers and urban dwellers alike, the Barn Owl should never be harmed or evicted from its nesting or roosting site. "Monkey-faced" is an apt name for this owl species. See page 28.

From A Painting By Wallace Hughes

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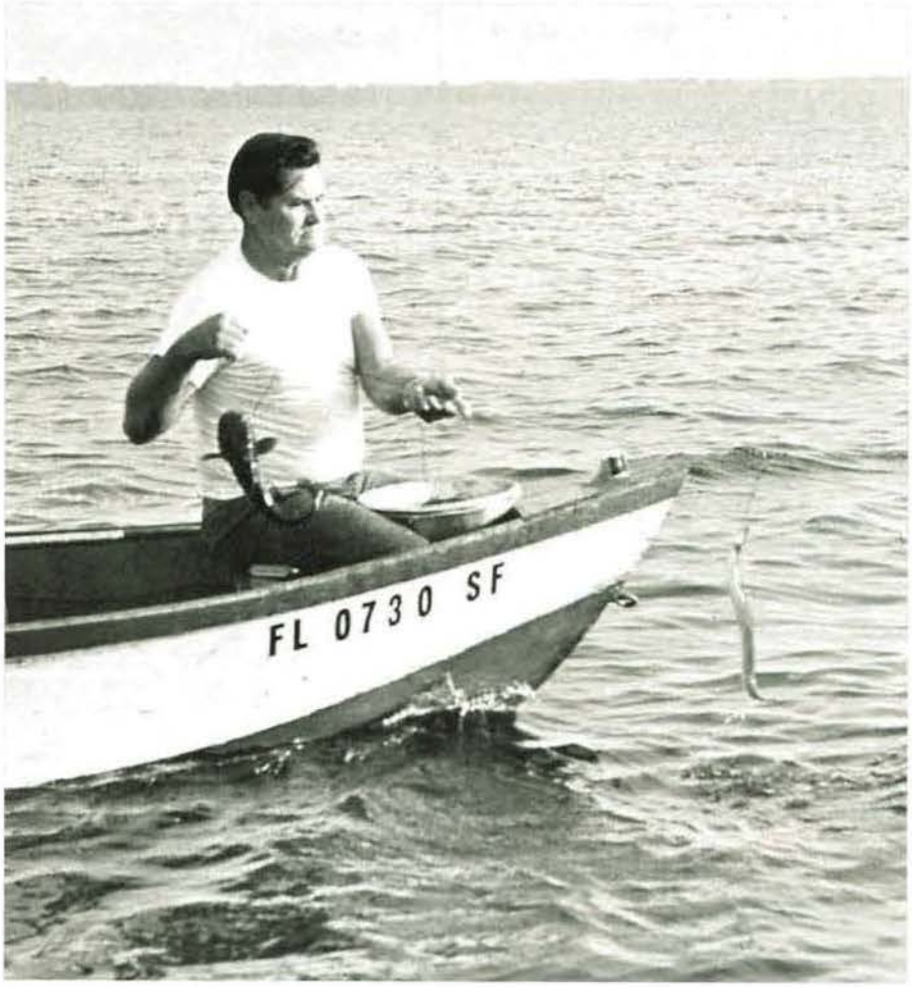

fishing is a way of life for some people, a relaxing sport for others, and a bit of both for men like

Catfish Columbus

By ROSS PARSONS

BASS FISHERMEN call them unprintable names. Bream fishermen call them a bonus and add them to the day's catch.

Restaurateurs who serve them call them money in the bank.

Fisheries biologists call them *Ictalurus nebulosus.*

Columbus White calls them speckled catfish, has spent the past 27 years fishing for them commercially, and probably knows more about the species than anyone else even wants to know.

The best place to find Columbus is on Newnans Lake, in Alachua County, just as the sun begins to burn the early morning mist off the water. He'll be working his way along 2,500 trotline hooks, hauling sparkling fresh catfish from the sandy lake bottom and flipping each one off the hook with a crooked wire. The fish pile up in the bow of the boat as Columbus, showing the experience of the long years at his trade, wastes neither time nor motion as he moves down the long line.

"I fished with my daddy when I was little, and learned a lot about the business from him before I went out in my own boat. Then Uncle Sam went to war and took me along. The government took advantage of my boating experience—I saw the world from the gun turret of a Merchant Marine freighter," chuckled Columbus, his hands constantly busy dropping cleared hooks in one pile and speckled cats in another. "Since then it's been Newnans Lake, Orange Lake, and Lake Lochloosa, where I haven't had any submarines to worry about."

As we talked Columbus pulled his four trotlines, with 700 hooks on one and 600 on each of the other three. An hour and 20 minutes later, with 100 pounds of fresh catfish in the fish well, he cranked the 50 horsepower outboard, spun his 14-foot wooden Skipjack boat in a tight circle, and ran for the dock.

His hundredweight of fish was a good haul for the month of May, according to Columbus, backed up by other commercial fishermen in the area.

"I've had occasion to bring home 300 pounds on one set," grunted the man of the shallow sea, "but that's a sometimes thing for most of us. Generally speaking, working five days a week, and with a couple of good hauls, we can figure on an honest $100 a week to live on. We don't complain too much about that."

Fishing 2,500 trotline hooks a night is not light work, but Columbus White, above, and his family manage to get the job done. Several species of fresh water catfish, and eel, seen right, have market value. The Whites are happy with a $100-per-week catch, which they dress for pick-up by wholesaler.

Florida commercial catfishing is a family affair as practiced by Columbus, his son, his son-in-law, his father-in-law, and other families in the business.

"We all operate our own boats, and set and pull our own lines. Then it's skinnin' and guttin' by me and my wife, Mertie, to get the fish ready for the wholesaler to pick up. All this time my daughter, Martie, re-racks the hooks and gets them ready for me to bait. If we have more fish to clean, Martie starts baitin' for the next evenin's set. That way, everyone works," he explained.

Photo By Ross Parsons

To watch experienced families work their catch is to watch a virtual ballet of fluid motion. The light knife strokes across the back of a fish's head, freeing the dark skin in strategic places, and the swift twist of a pair of pliers in strong hands removes it in two strips. A turn of the hand, a flash of steel, and the head and entrails are gone, leaving only the chunky pink flesh—ready for the frying pan or basket.

Listening to professional fishermen such as Columbus is to collect a capsule history of the job, from the days "before the war" when flat-bottomed skiffs and long oars propelled catfishermen to their selected spots, and when the lines were fed into the water from open wooden tubs. But even then it was the man who knew the lake bottom, who had the perseverance to change baits daily until the right combination appeared, and who had learned to think like a speckled cat—it was this type of fisherman who consistently took big hauls from the lakes.

"We worked our way up through small outboards and different types of boats until today you see most of the commercial men in the wooden 14- or 16-foot Skipjack model. They sort of standardize all over the state, except for motors. Around central Florida the 50- or 65-horse engine is common, but down in Lake Okeechobee, where they have a lot more water to cover, they go up to 135s, or even a couple of 85s on the back of the boat."

These hard-driving fishermen, who make their living with baits, boats, brains and brawn, estimate a Skipjack's life expectancy at four years, after which a new one, running in the neighborhood of $300, will be ordered. The outboards will probably be replaced in half that time, because of the strain of hard, constant use in all types of weather.

(*Continued on next page*)

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"The folks who talk about normal use of a motor never've found out how many hours we put on a rig in a year's time," smiled Columbus.

White noted the decreasing number of commercial operators over the years, blaming the drop equally on factory wages and 40-hour weeks, and the declining water quality in the lakes he fishes.

"There's no doubt that young men are being drawn away from family businesses like this," Columbus said, "and the water used to be good around here. But with all these dams they keep puttin' in, the water doesn't get a chance to rise and fall, and the fishin' is just goin' to hell. It used to drop down and let the sun cook the bottom, which made for better fishin' during the next high water. Now it doesn't, and that's part of what ruined Lake Apopka. It's goin' to do the same thing to Orange, Lochloosa, and Newnans. You mark my words!"

Columbus White laid out his lines Thursday night, baited with fresh, cut up hens ("Frozen chicken's no good. The cats won't take it.") in place of the grass shrimp he had used the previous night. He had already run through crawfish, beef heart, and even soap as catfish baits that week. As he said, "The catfish is a funny critter, and you have to offer 'em what they want if you expect to haul any fish."

"People are sort of funny too," he added. "Some try to put a bad name on commercial fishermen. But a good catfisherman sets his lines late in the evening after most of the sport fishermen are already off the water. The lines are sunk in 10 to 12 feet of water where a propeller won't get tangled in 'em. And we generally don't go near the shallow water, because the catfish just aren't there. But you do have people who buy a commercial license, tie a bunch of hooks on a line, and throw it out on a weekend when they come out from town. They figure they can pick up a few dollars that way, but some of them don't even bother to pick up their lines until the next week. They lay them in shallow water and get both the sport fishermen and the waterskiers mad, and we get the blame."

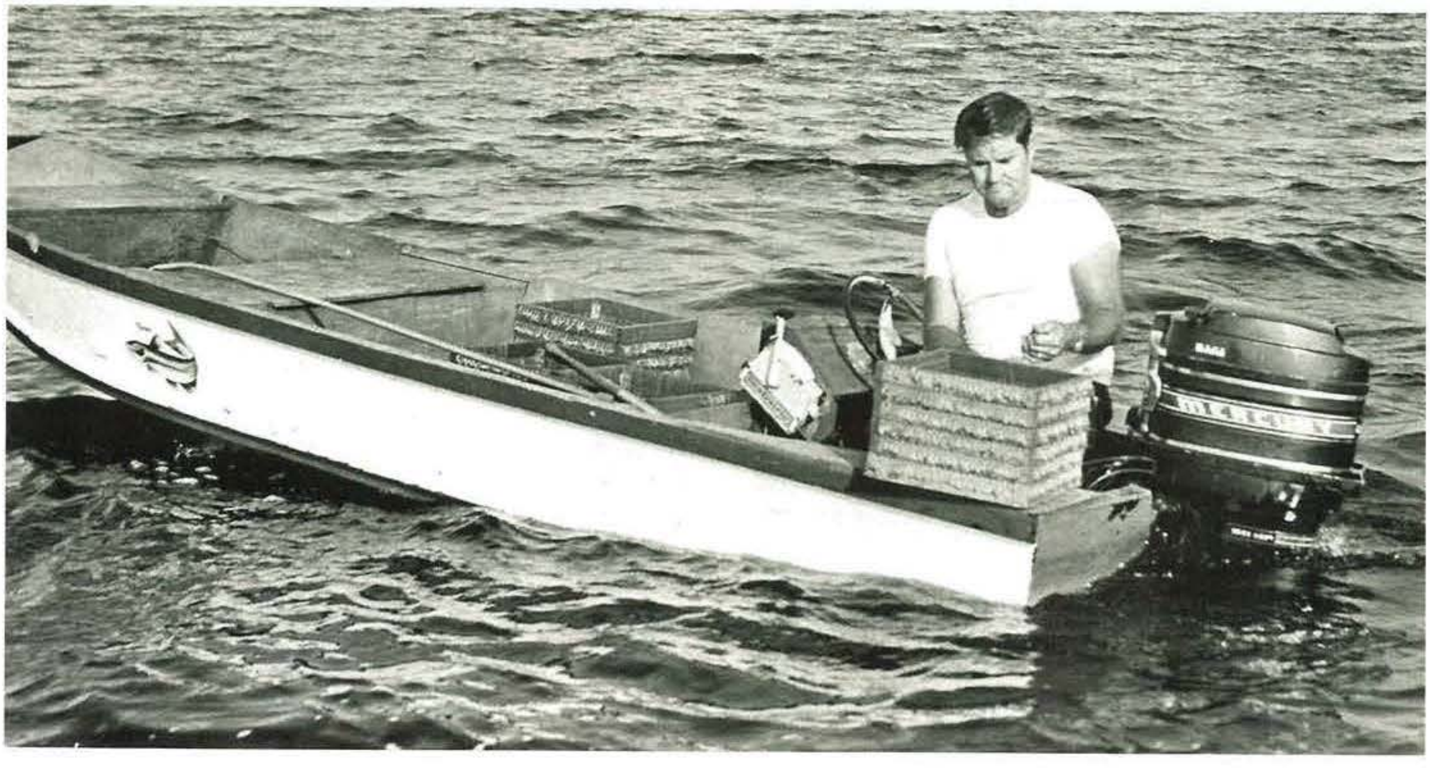
(Editor's Note: A new rule adopted by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission and now in effect states that no person shall allow bush hooks, setlines, or trotlines to remain in the water for more than 48 hours without removing any fish caught, and also requires that every trotline be marked with the owner's name and the number of his fishing or commercial license.)

A good night's sleep, and Columbus White would be out on the water early Friday morning, pitting his experience, skill, and wits against Mother Nature to involve his family in the age-old trade that is the source of their income. Then, over the weekend, he and his wife and children, and some friends, perhaps, are likely to go bream fishing for relaxation.

"When you spend all your life working on the water, it seems kind of a shame not to enjoy it for yourself when you can," grinned Columbus as he drove off—probably in search of a supply of some new catfish bait he'd heard about and wanted to try late Monday evening. ●

Most commercial catfishermen use wooden, flat-bottomed boats like Columbus's Skipjack, seen below. Motor size is determined by how much water a man normally covers. Bait is key to good catches, and White has tested them all—beef hearts, fresh chicken, and even soap. Variation of menu to give them "what they want," is a help!

Photo By Ross Parsons



Traveling Angler

a variety of top spots and best times offer sportsmen the chance to sample the best of both fresh and salt water fishing enjoyments

By CHARLES WATERMAN

WHEREVER FISHERMEN gather and lie to each other they eventually come up with dream suggestions for fishing trips to far places—and some not so far. I haven't been everywhere I'd like to go, but I've made a short list of some of the best places for light tackle, with some justification for the selections.

Except for trophy bass, I have left Florida out because most of what we report here is about Florida fishing, and I assume our readers have read or can read about that in more detail. Most of this is for those who want to travel elsewhere.

Now in making such a list you have to specialize a little. I'm speaking only of the kinds of fishing that ordinarily go with plugging, spinning, or fly tackle. These spots aren't necessarily in the order of their desirability. Here they are, and I hope nobody gets mad.

Maine for smallmouth bass fishing. The New England fish may not average as large as those caught in reservoirs farther south, but if you get to them in early June you'll find them hitting on the surface. Only single-hooked lures have been allowed at that time when I've fished there. Maine natives consider the smallmouths trash fish and much prefer trout. There's fine smallmouth fishing in Canada, but Maine is easier to reach for most of us, and Maine lakes are among the most beautiful in the country. Most of the U.S. river fishing for smallmouths has deteriorated badly and there are impoundments where many smallmouth rivers used to flow. That's another ball game.

Idaho for steelhead in the fall. Rivers like the big Clearwater are having good runs these years, and it's good across in Washington on the Grand Ronde. I don't say this is the best steelheading in the world, but it's easy to get to. Those monsters in Canada are a long haul away. If the seagoing rainbows don't show at the right time, there's still good trout fishing and some bass.

Lake Michigan for coho salmon. I won't bear down on this because most of that coho fishing is trolling—but there's some casting at times. This may not be as sporty as some of the coho fishing on the Pacific Coast, but there are plenty of big fish, and there are king salmon too.

Yellowstone National Park area for trout. This has been so much publicized it needs no boost from me, but there are two especially good times—early summer and along about early October. I believe there is more good trout fishing within 200 miles of Old Faithful than anywhere else in the country.

North Carolina for a variety of offshore light tackle business and some of the finest surf and bay angling. This is a home for some of the best surf casters in the world, and there's more of it right on up the coast to the north—but North Carolina isn't far from Florida. In addition to the big billfishes offshore, the dolphin fishing is spectacular in the heat of summer. Dolphin are generally abused with tackle that's too heavy. Hook them on something light and their fight is about as wild-eyed as anything in the ocean.

Iceland for Atlantic salmon. That's a long trip, but they say salmon fishing is more consistent there than anywhere else. Salmon fishing is getting better

(*Continued on next page*)

Big channel bass like this one are caught from North Carolina's Pamlico Sound in warm weather—one of the good, not-so-distant spots for Florida fishermen who want a change of scene now and then. Available there are bay, surf, and offshore angling—all are superb!

(*Continued from preceding page*)

along several stretches of Canadian rivers, but I'm inclined to believe Iceland is still the best bet for a single trip. Midsummer is good. I've never been there, but the reports are nearly always good.

North Florida for trophy bass. I do not say that northern Florida is the *best* bass fishing in the world. I still think it's the best area for giant bass, even though you may catch more fish farther south. They say there are bigger ones in Cuba. Maybe there'll be access to that some day.

LOOK BACK into fishing history and you can come up with a list of lures that reached such popularity they sold at premium prices. Generally it's in the field of bass fishing.

I believe the Rapala attracted more attention than any other single bait. There was a time when you had to rent them and put up a healthy deposit to guard against loss. Then a whole list of American manufacturers made near-duplicates of the Finnish sensation, the price came down to normal, and the Rapala and its relatives were just good baits that still worked.

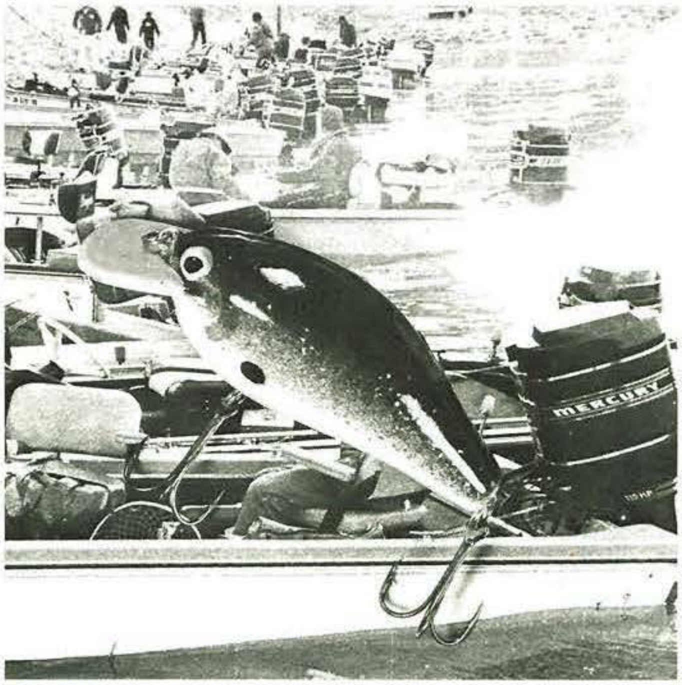
That last part hasn't always been true of plug sensations. The bass got tired of some of them, I guess, for there have been many that disappeared after a year or two—or showed up as sale items on sporting goods bargain counters.

Well, the latest meteor on the bass horizon is the Big-O, which got its start as a hand-whittled job invented by Fred Young of Tennessee. The name was bought by a Hot Springs, Ark., manufacturer, and there were some 90,000 of them on order before the first machine-built specimens slid off the assembly line. Other manufacturers were getting into the act with other names for similar baits.

Such things move fast these days, largely because of the bass tournaments. The first handmade Big-O's brought high prices, were rented for competition, and guarded like Picasso originals. They won tournaments, and Bob Cobb, of B.A.S.S., wrote glowing prose about them.

Is the Big-O magic? Well, it has *something* although it isn't particularly distinctive in appearance. It works best when simply cranked fast. It has a short wiggle, works fairly well below the surface, and employs a paddle-shaped mouthpiece. Those who have won money through its use say its action is distinctive. I can't see that it's much different from a lot of other lures, but the bass seem to feel it is, and I very seldom strike lures.

Since there are going to be a lot of imitations and near-imitations, I doubt if anyone will become an instant millionaire, although the thing shapes up like a bankroll for a lot of people. The quickest builders will make the most.



The Big-O began as a handmade lure, but it's made a big splash on bass tournament scene since as production bait.

The forecast: It is a good lure and will stay around, regardless of the name under which it sports its distinctive wiggle. In my humble opinion, the Big-O has the advantage of being usable in a variety of waters, not being exactly a specialty bait. Then, there will be the salt water versions.

By the way, does anyone remember the Doofer?

SOMETIMES A CASUAL, temporary fishing rule becomes a sacred motto to be remembered and followed regardless of conditions. In bass fishing there has been so much talk about fishing slower, slower, and still slower that many folks never take advantage of those days when the bass want their lures fast, or even faster.

This dawned on me more than 20 years ago when I was having some very poor fishing on Lake Shasta out in California. I was a little shook when a local lad who didn't know any rules about bass began coming in with heavy stringers and announced he had been catching those fish by fast trolling. He let me go along on one trip, and I was aghast to find him whining along about 20 feet from the deep shoreline and dragging a plug so fast it almost bent his rod double. I am guessing he was doing six or eight miles an hour, a respectable speed even for bonito or wahoo. When a bass struck, which occurred with startling regularity, it was quite a sensation, especially if the bass happened to take heading the other way.

Of course, the motor wake was stirring up fish, and in this case they were hitting my friend's plug. Later I heard of the Buck Perry method of bottom gouging at high speed, learned to skitter spoons across bonnets (lily pads), and was surprised to find that on some days fast reeling was helpful, even for catching bluegills.

Often—not always—the faster lure speeds are best when water temperatures are ideal and the bass are full of pep. In cold water or warm water, slow reeling is usually better, and surface lures should be worked with long pauses between twitches. Although 50-degree water certainly isn't ideal bass temperature, there are some experts who believe that the bass gets his full vigor somewhere in the fifties and retains it clear on up around 80, even though the ideal temperatures are somewhere in between. This means the bass is capable of catching any lure as fast as you can crank it, if he really wants it.

It's logical to crank fast if the bass will take that kind of a retrieve. By cranking fast you cover more water and make more casts. Some of the mouthpiece plugs are made for that kind of operation, and the same tactics work for near-surface spoons and spinner baits—sometimes. The thing to remember is that the bass can catch it if he wants to any time the water temperature is reasonable.

"SUITCASE ROD" used to be a bad word to fishermen who were persnickity about rod action. In those days of metal ferrules only, and bulky installations of them, a rod with multiple sections bent in an unhappy series of straight sections and short curves. With more and more fishermen traveling farther and farther, there was increased need for compact sticks, and they have become much better.

The old steel telescoping rods left considerable to be desired. The first telescoping glass jobs I saw were poles to be used without reels. Now there are some really fine telescoping sticks for spinning and/or baitcasting. I have been looking at some built by Haenelt International Tackle, R.D. 1, Bloomingburg, New York 12721.

These aren't exactly cheap, as much of the work is a custom proposition, but I certainly can't see anything wrong with the action, and felt a little stupid when someone kidded me into thinking one of Ed Haenelt's jetty rods was a one-piecer instead of a telescoper.

As Haenelt explains it, the principle is a matter of the glass joints "working" as you cast rather than holding completely rigid.

Haenelt also builds takedown fly rods, and I went for one of those—a 6½-footer that takes a six or seven line. This one doesn't telescope, but comes down in three pieces. Longer rods take down into four pieces. You can't see the ferrules without close examination, and if they hamper the action I can't tell it. The fly rod sells for $55.00.

POLARIZATION HAS BECOME a stylish word, and I may as well use it in reference to fishing and hunting. The amount of polarization found among anglers is especially noticeable, part of it geographic, part of it method, and part of it a matter of species of fish sought. Even when I find myself among a bunch of ardent full-time fishermen, name dropping is likely to fall pretty flat because I don't know which names to drop.

I was talking to the author of a lot of trout fishing lore, and he had never heard of Roland Martin or Bill Dance, the bass fishing champions. I talked to the author of a bass book and he obviously didn't know Ernie Schwiebert from Elmer Keith. I couldn't find anyone who knew any casting champions by name except Jon Tarantino. His name sticks with people for some reason, even if they don't know just exactly what he does.

But I'm as bad as the rest of them. When you get into deep water ocean fishing I'm amazingly stupid for someone who has scribbled outdoor stuff for 35 years.

A while back I was giving a sloppy casting demonstration at a fishing conference and a fellow a little older than I am began doing some friendly heckling. He pretended he couldn't cast at all but would like some instruction with a fly rod. This has happened to me many times, and I wasn't at all surprised when he picked up a rod and began shooting a lot of line. Then he mentioned that he was so-and-so, former world's champion fly caster. By golly, I didn't even remember the name long enough to make a note of it. If I were a world's champion, I'd hate to have people forget my name that fast.

Fame is not only fleeting. The guy who achieves it seldom realizes what a tiny segment of the world it occupies unless he gets clear out into some other field and finds no one ever heard of him.

I guess fame sometimes feeds on itself. Arnold Palmer, Jack Nicklaus, and Yogi Berra reached the point where they're known by people who don't know anything about baseball or golf. That doesn't happen in hunting or fishing, or even competitive shooting or casting.

I was standing at a gunshop counter the other day and suddenly realized the guy next to me was Joe Benner, former pistol champion and holder of an Olympic gold medal. I guess nobody else noticed him, and I wouldn't have except that I tried for a number of years to hit pistol targets and had admired him from a distance. The fact that hitting a pistol target in the black part might be just as hard as hitting a ball into a hole has no bearing on the business of public recognition. You tend to make a hero of someone who can do something you've tried very hard to do and don't do very well.

So when you mumble that casting champions or shooting champions don't get their just deserts in fame and fortune, remember that not many people have tried to throw a plug into a little circle or really try to hit a dot on a piece of paper with a rifle or pistol.

The black bass tournament fishermen are more likely to become famous than any other group of anglers. Why? Because a lot of people try to catch bass. ●

a dog for all seasons

By CHARLES DICKEY

IS THERE A BREED of hunting dog which can be trained to meet the needs of a sportsman who hunts both upland game and waterfowl?

This is like asking if there is one shotgun that can be used effectively for all wing shooting, or a rod and reel that is suitable for any type of fishing. (It's better to have one shotgun or fishing rig than no gear at all.)

The answer to the dog question is "Yes, but . . . ." It's a question being asked more and more by Florida hunters who live in cities and suburbs. They do well to own one hunting dog and stay out of trouble with neighbors and leash laws. In addition, their dog often has to assume the role of family pet.

Most professional dog trainers will tell you it can't be done. From their standpoint, they're right. They are specialists who spend much of their time refining small points and style. They have to turn out finished products meeting the standards of the breed, and then some. If they don't turn out better dogs than the amateur, then they're soon out of business. They have their hands full in training a dog to do what it is bred to do and are rarely interested in teaching the dog to do something another breed has been developed to do better.

This means that if you want a utility dog you'll probably have to train him yourself. That's all right. You should train your own. An amateur trainer who only owns one dog can do a better job than a professional! Not for field trials and silver trophies but for the owner's particular needs.

There are several reasons. First, if you buy the puppy when it is from four to seven weeks old, it will adopt you as its parent. You will have a closer relationship with the dog than conditions allow a professional trainer to have. Secondly, you will spend a great deal of time with the dog; the professional is limited on how much time he can spend with each dog he is training. Your puppy will be around people more, receive more love and attention, and will learn more about sensing moods and tone of voice. Also, if you bring a puppy into a modern home, with all the noises of television, children and washing machines, and take him with you on car trips, he'll become used to a variety of noises and it's unlikely he'll be gunshy.

Another reason you can do a better job, for your particular purposes, than a professional is that you know better what your requirements are. To have a utility dog, you must start off with the idea that you are going to compromise on requirements; the professional is usually not able to do this. If your dog is a pointing breed, say a Brittany spaniel, he can be taught to retrieve waterfowl to a blind. He can be taught to stay quietly as the ducks circle, to watch where the ducks fall when you shoot, and, on your command, to go and get them. If you train him well, he will not lose any ducks—but he will never perform with as much style and dash and speed as a Labrador retriever. If a professional wants a duck dog, he will never start with a pointing breed. He'll choose a breed which has been bred and developed for waterfowl, such as a Labrador, golden or Chesapeake retriever.

A utility dog can be taught to do a lot of things in the field, but remember: Because you make him a versatile dog, it is not fair of you to ever expect him to do a particular thing as well as a specialist. If you take your Brittany quail hunting with a buddy who owns a pair of excellent pointers, the chances are that your friend's dogs will find most of the birds. You must be prepared for his barbed remarks and have a story to tell about how good your Brittany is in a duck blind or dove field.

Let's say you are an enthusiastic wing shooter who lives in Florida and you can only own one dog. You hunt mostly on weekends but you like to hunt a long season so you take a few trips for marsh hens, doves, bobwhite quail, snipe and ducks. You also know where a few woodcock spend the winter.

(Continued on next page)

Photos By Charles Dickey

Pointing breeds, such as the author's setter Smokey, at left, make fine utility dogs. They can be trained to retrieve waterfowl, right—also other game birds. In addition, this breed craves and shows much affection, so makes a good family pet. Early training and discipline—preferably by the owner—is the main key to developing steady, if not stylish, all-round dog.

(Continued from preceding page)

You don't plan to enter your dog in field trials and simply want a dog which will help you find game and retrieve shot birds.

There are three main families of bird dogs: Retrievers, pointing dogs and flushing dogs. Which family should you choose from? Flushing dogs, such as springer and cocker spaniels, are trained to work in close and flush game, hopefully when you are in range. Flushing dogs can be used for woodcock, marsh hens, and to retrieve doves and they often make excellent duck dogs. But they are far from ideal for bobwhite quail. They are not bred to point but to flush; they would put the birds up too soon and hunters would get few shots.

Retrieving dogs have keen noses, but they have not been bred and developed for pointing. The retrieving instinct in several species, especially Labradors, is so inborn that they'll pick up anything which falls from the sky, but they're not adaptive to pointing bobwhite quail.

If we eliminate the flushing and retrieving families of dogs, this leaves the pointing breeds. For hundreds of years, the pointing breeds have been developed for pointing qualities, but most also have some tendency to retrieve naturally.

There are two things in a dog the owner can do little or nothing about: The animal's instinct to hunt and its scenting ability. He's born with these qualities and he has them at about the same level when he dies. If you carefully choose a pedigreed pup, then your chances are improved for owning a dog with strong hunting instinct and a good nose. The point here is that if your dog has the ingredients to do a fair job of pointing, then you can teach him to retrieve whether he has any natural inclination for it at all. A German shepherd or a mongrel from the dog pound can be taught to retrieve if you start them early enough.

The selection of a pointing breed means you have a dog with the potential of handling bobwhite quail. It could point woodcock, sometimes snipe, and it could indicate marsh hens, probably visually. It could also be taught to retrieve these species, plus mourning doves and waterfowl.

By a process of elimination we have arrived at choosing a utility dog from the family of pointing dogs. Now, which particular breed should we select? Remember, our utility dog has to be the family pet, and on your travels you may be checking into motels.

There are four main breeds of pointing dogs in Florida: Pointers, setters, Brittany spaniels and German shorthairs. There is a host of strange breeds from Europe which trickle in, but none has much chance of gaining acceptance or lasting importance.

While there are no statistics available, probably more than 80 percent of the pointing dogs in the state are pointers. Setters are barely holding their own, one reason being that people think the setter gets too hot in Florida and his coat picks up too many stickems. Brittany spaniels are definitely increasing in popularity and will continue to do so, especially if the keenness of nose is increased by selective breeding. It is unlikely the German shorthair will become more popular, one reason being that it is unfairly pitted in the field against pointers. The shorthair was designed for a different type of hunting than Southern bobwhite quail.

Smokey, now a house companion, has earned a rest. He has worked the woodcock coverts of the Northeast, above, the pheasant fields of the Midwest, right, and the mountains of California for band-tailed pigeons. He even retrieved Canada geese. Dogs of the flushing and retrieving breeds couldn't be expected to master this sort of versatility.

For the utility dog, I would choose a setter or a Brittany. Generally, neither has the nose of a pointer. Seldom will you see a setter or Brittany which is the efficient hunting machine that is today's Southern pointer. But seldom will you see a pointer which has the affection, disposition, and personality of a setter or Brittany. I have never heard of a professional dog breeder who bred pointers for intelligence. Speed, nose, courage, and stamina, *yes*, but not for intelligence. There are a few kennels around, often run by amateurs, who still consider intelligence when mating setters and Brittanies. (Naturally, I refer to the broad term English setters, the Irish setter having been bred into a nitwit by show people years ago.)

Generally, setters and Brittanies are more adaptable as family pets than pointers. They are not as rough and rambunctious in the house. They are more sensitive, perceptive and friendly. They crave affection, as do most people, and they answer a family need for mutual love. They're also easier to get into motels, few managers being able to ignore their friendly greetings.

Despite all of the fallacies and old-wives tales connected with owning and training hunting dogs, you can have a dog which is the family pet and also a field utility dog, one capable of turning in a fair job of pointing and retrieving. A family dog, which spends several hours a day around you, knows full well when you are playing at home and when you mean business in the field. By the tone of your voice, or by simply reaching for your belt, he knows.

Professional trainers, who may have spent long hard hours perfecting a dog, often cringe when the owner takes it. The trainer knows the owner will not be firm in commands, that the dog will test the owner to see what he can get away with, just like a child. Also, the owner has likely lost all rapport with the dog and will have to spend patient hours regaining it. The owner will also likely give too many commands to the dog, talk to it too much when the dog is in the field working. This is how the fallacy that you can't have a single dog as pet and hunting dog got started, and continues.

Allow me to tell you about a setter I owned for a dozen years. During this time, my job required that I travel the Southeast, then the West Coast and finally I lived in New England. The setter, Smokey, is now 15 and serves as a companion dog for my mother, Billie Dickey. Because of an old hip injury, she uses the dog as a crutch, holding on to Smokey when her hip gets weak.

I bought Smokey when he was six weeks old, after having known and hunted with his parents and grandparents. He was out of shooting dog stock, not field trial; I knew most of my hunting would be on foot. I did not want a wide-ranging dog or a real fast one. For my purposes, a steady plugger which would stay in sight and quarter back and forth was what I needed. The chances that Smokey would meet these requirements were excellent because his immediate ancestors had those qualities.

Smokey was born with a strong hunting instinct

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Photos By Charles Dickey

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but only an average nose. As is true of nearly all English setters, he was affectionate and sensitive to the moods of people around him. I do not know if he was born with a high I.Q. or simply gained that reputation later because he was around so many people and different hunting conditions that his perception and adaptability gave the illusion of his being extra smart about some things.

Smokey was broken on bobwhite quail and then introduced to retrieving doves. Over the years, he was used as a utility dog on pheasant, chukar partridge, California quail, band-tailed pigeons, snipe, woodcock, ruffed grouse, Canada geese, and many species of ducks. He was not a great pointing dog, but he could handle all of the upland species if scenting conditions were at least fair. He was not as good a retriever as top Labradors, of course, but he almost never lost a dead or crippled bird.

I always liked his attitude. He didn't care what we hunted or where we went. He hunted in snow in zero temperature, and in 110 degrees in the desert for California quail and to retrieve mourning dove. He hunted chukar partridge at 6,000-foot altitudes, and coastal bogs in Maine for woodcock. He retrieved geese to pit blinds in North Carolina and ran down steep mountains to fetch band-tailed pigeons in California, which would hit and roll as much as 500 feet below where we perched.

There were a few special things which made Smokey a successful utility dog. His yard training started when he was seven weeks old. He was taught to heel, sit, force-broken to retrieve, and to "whoa," all before he was six months old. During this period he was not taken hunting. "Heel," "sit," "fetch," and "whoa" were drilled into him so thoroughly that when he was taken hunting he was fairly easy to control, even when he found his first covey of bobwhite and then the singles.

As I knew Smokey would be traveling with me, I let him sleep at the foot of my bed. There was little house breaking. I knew there would be times when he'd be in a motel room by himself, so I taught him early that he could not play inside.

While it is hardly a "must" for a bird dog's repertoire, I taught Smokey to shake hands, walk on his hind legs, and hold an egg in his mouth without breaking it. The neighborhood kids loved

Photos By Charles Dickey

First six months is the period to impress upon your puppy who is boss! Obedience to commands can be learned, but, he was born with his hunting instinct and his "nose," which will not be improved by training. A picture of concentration, Smokey, at left, is on point. The ability is natural; he's bred to point. His retrieving skill needed polishing, so, he was trained to fetch it all—stick, ball, tin can, or training pad. His only balk occurred on a hot day, on his first dove hunt. Soon, however, he was retrieving doves like a pro, and continued doing it through 10 seasons. Every so often though, he liked being the boss!

it, and later it paid off when I wanted to check into a motel where the management had had trouble with dogs. When I showed them how well Smokey behaved, and how well trained he was, they couldn't turn us down. After I put Smokey through his paces and tricks, the usual comment was, "I wish you'd train some of the humans that come in here."

During his first four months with us, the pup was in and out of the house and I spent as much time with him as I could. How else can a dog learn about humans? The amateur trainer always has this important advantage over a professional—time spent with dog. At first I spent no more than 20 minutes a day on fundamental discipline. But as the dog got older I increased it to 30 minutes. The other time was spent in play and petting and just letting him be with me or ride along in the car. In hardly any time at all a dog learns when you are playing and when you mean business in a work session.

Smokey had a natural tendency to retrieve, but I ignored it. I force-broke him to retrieve, which simply means he was trained to fetch anything I threw, bring it in, and hold it until he was told "Let go." He was made to fetch everything I threw —training pad, stick, rubber ball or tin can. With this thorough grounding he retrieved on his first hunt and all other hunts for the next 10 years. The only time he ever balked was on his first trip to a dove field, with the first dove on a hot day. He picked up a young dove and the feathers peeled like the bird had been hit with a jet fan. Smokey was hot and he dropped the bird and refused to pick it up. I put my gun away, got out my leash, and put Smokey at heel. I forced him to carry the dove for 30 minutes. It was not a question of my being unkind, but simply a question of deciding on the spot who was going to be boss. After this one session, I never had trouble with him again about refusing to pick up any kind of bird.

When a dog reaches the age of about four months he decides he wants to be boss of the partnership but you can come along and he will put up with you. This is a critical time. You must kindly, but forcefully, convince him again that you are the boss.

From time to time, for the rest of his life, he will test you, trying to assert his will over yours. This will most often happen when he is in the field, two or three hundred yards away. As with small children, he knows exactly how far he can push you, but once in awhile he'll see if he can extend the limit. For instance, Smokey always slept on the floor at the foot of my bed and knew that he was not allowed on it. About every nine months, in the middle of the night, he'd try to sneak in bed with me. I would invariably wake up, kick him off, and preach him a sermon. My sermons were usually good for another nine months, and then he'd try me again.

Smokey was no paragon of virtue; he had his faults, some of which I never succeeded in correcting. He could not pass a pile of cow manure without rolling in it. In fact, I suspect he went looking for it. I strapped him, threw him in cold water in winter and lectured him considerably, but I never broke him of it. I never got him to work in as closely as I wanted for woodcock, but I put a sheep bell on him and this helped compensate when hunting thick cover. He was a social feller, always friendly, and he loved to find another hunting party and join up with them, to my total embarrassment. However, we worked out a mutual toleration of each other. He forgave me my sin of frequently missing with my shotgun and I forgave most of his transgressions. He was a friend and partner and let me be boss most of the time.

It's more fun to be afield with any *manageable* dog than no dog at all. If, because of your particular conditions, you can only own one dog, it's still possible for you to start with a pointing dog which you can develop into a utility dog, and it can also be a family dog. Don't worry about the high standards set by field trial people; that's a different league altogether. You know from the start that you can't have a utility dog that is capable of competing with the specialists. That was your original compromise, remember. The most important thing is that the dog suits you, your family, and, reasonably well, the buddies you hunt with. ●

INTRODUCTION

A noteworthy conservation milestone was passed on March 20, 1973, when the formal report of the Committee on North American Wildlife Policy was presented to the 38th North American Wildlife and Natural Resources Conference, in Washington, D.C. The document, which is historically significant in the annals of wildlife conservation in our hemisphere, was presented by Dr. Durward L. Allen, eminent educator and author, of Purdue University, committee chairman.

That report, which is being reprinted in FLORIDA WILDLIFE in a three-part series, beginning with this issue, updates another historic document, known as the American Game Policy, adopted by the 17th American Game Conference, in 1930.

As many readers know, that remarkable statement of philosophy and policy has been the guiding light for America's single generation of professional wildlife managers; indeed, it helped establish scientific game management as a profession.

The late Dr. Aldo Leopold, the "father of game management," was chairman of the original policy committee, of which there is but one surviving member, Seth Gordon, of California, who is still active in conservation work, and who also served, as an honorary member, on the 1973 policy committee.

The new report is being reprinted in its entirety for the information of FLORIDA WILDLIFE readers. It is the result of a year's work by Dr. Allen, Daniel A. Poole, committee secretary and president of the Wildlife Management Institute, and 20 fellow committee members representing different geographical areas of the nation and continent; people of various disciplines and points of view.

While we in Florida can take pride in all that has been accomplished since the adoption of the 1930 American Game Policy, it is our hope that the ideas, criticisms, goals, and, above all, the optimistic outlook expressed in this the new North American Wildlife Policy will be thoughtfully weighed, staunchly supported, and freely shared by all who read it, for it contains new objectives far-reaching enough to keep all of us occupied for another 43 years, at least.

Dr. O. E. Frye, Jr., Director
Florida Game
and Fresh Water Fish Commission

Committee Members

Durward L. Allen, Chairman
Daniel A. Poole, Secretary
Enrique Beltran—Mexico
Eugene F. Bossenmaier—Manitoba
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Copies of the new North American Wildlife Policy may be obtained, at $1.00 cost, from the Wildlife Management Institute, Wire Building, Washington, D.C. 20005.

North American Wildlife Policy

Part I

THIS REPORT is a re-examination of principles and programs affecting our wildlife resources. It supplements and updates the historic statement of December 2, 1930, by the American Game Policy Committee. As chairman Aldo Leopold told the Seventeenth American Game Conference, the original committee was primarily concerned with game problems. However, their report did not fail to recognize the important social values of all wild creatures.

Today's great environmental issues are, literally, without limit. In one context or another, we find ourselves dealing with all living things. However, in its concern with policies and management, the committee conceives wildlife to mean, most commonly, free-living animals of major significance to man.

We regard management as the application of knowledge in the regulation and enhancement of wildlife resources for human benefits. Most notably it consists in meeting the habitat requirements of all species, adopting necessary regulations, and providing for enforcement.

In the sense used here, a policy is a course of action recommended as a preferred means of serving the continuing public interest.

In proposing guidelines for administration and management, we abstract, as best we may and without consensus, the findings of experience and research. We build upon the report of 1930 in confidence that the total record will provide useful terms of reference for people who face decisions.

As in the past, the major objective is to preserve and improve the wildlife resource. This states our support for the traditional concern of conservationists, that wildlife should contribute to the greatest good of the most people over the longest time.

This report is addressed most specifically to problems we know best, those of North America. However, it offers substantial ideas that might well be exported around the world. As an independent product of citizen concern, it could help advance the cause of a universal ecology in the minds of people of many nations. We regard this as a conceptual goal for the future.

In its composition, the committee encompasses representation from Mexico and the long-established participation of colleagues in Canada. Since a majority of members are from the United States, the programs of states are frequently referred to. If any criticism is implied, we feel most free in applying it to ourselves. Where the word "state" is used, let anyone who finds it appropriate read "province," or other governmental unit.

Why again?

We find a new need to affirm or create policy because new standards and rules are emerging in our society. The last half-century has brought great changes, and more are on the way.

Although the future is unpredictable, certain trends are evident. From today's unprecedented

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The wildlife policy objective is to preserve and improve earth's resources—including fishing and hunting values. A rapidly urbanizing population's largely estranged from outdoor interests, "earth knowledge"—a perilous tendency, socially, politically, economically, and culturally.

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peak of population, there will be a further increase in decades ahead.

Our resource-consuming technology will continue to grow. Pressures on the environment will exceed anything yet seen, as every kind of natural asset is under accelerating demand.

Possibly this describes a creeping crisis. However, somewhere ahead, men on earth are likely to encounter a period of ultimate trial. That could be a time when too many people in a vastly overtaxed environment will find wisdom to match their knowledge. They may then permit their numbers to decline to a level where lives of dignity and fulfillment can be available to all.

This outlook faces some hard realities, but it offers a hopeful future and should be a constructive basis for policy making.

For now, we must prepare for tensions and shortage. Wildlife and outdoor pleasures are the most fragile and vulnerable part of our living standard. How will they rank in times of resource emergency?

They will need public acceptance as a competing value in our uses of land and water. They will require high priority in political and economic decisions. Otherwise they will be lost in the present, and their future will be foreclosed.

In a sense, our program for wildlife is a holding action. Today and in years immediately ahead, the first big job is to prevent irreversible losses—of species, populations, and life communities.

But an equal challenge is to prevent a cultural loss. Widely varied patterns of living are among the many kinds of diversity that enrich the human experience. In our rapidly urbanizing population, many are already estranged from outdoor interests, earth knowledge, and pioneer skills. These elements in our culture should remain available to generations beyond our own.

The record of progress

The first policy report was outstanding in its far-sightedness. It described problems that are still with us, but it also saw needs that have been largely fulfilled. There are important entries in the credit column:

Large acreages of land and water, in public ownership, are dedicated as wildlife habitat and devoted to public use.

Photo By Leonard Lee Rue III

A forward look calls for more funding of wildlife production programs by general taxes, since all species—and all people—benefit. Modern study centers, such as the Eustis Fisheries Laboratory, above, provide biological facts to base fish and wildlife management upon.

Photo By Wallace Hughes

Wildlife management has been professionalized. Many colleges and universities offer a wildlife curriculum and its supporting courses in biological, social, and earth sciences.

Centers and programs for wildlife research have been established and funded to provide facts on which efficient management can be based.

At all levels of government much has been done to free wildlife administration from the blight of partisan politics.

Energetic and well-informed citizen organizations are supporting the causes of public interest and ecological management.

Let us hasten to say that more should be accomplished in these fields. More critically, our present report describes issues—some of long standing—on which we have hardly made a constructive start. It may be that the easy solutions, if there were any, have already been applied. The future of wildlife is entangled in the total complexity of man's relationship to nature.

Principles and Premises

Decades of this century have witnessed steady gains in useful biological knowledge. Among leadership there is growing sophistication in attitudes toward wildlife and its associated resources. From both science and philosophy we draw assumptions it seems constructive to state:

Each living thing survives and plays some essential part in the operation of a self-maintaining community of plants and animals. The community and its site, including climate, constitute the ecosystem—the basic working unit of the biosphere.

Habitat is local environment. Its quality determines abundance or scarcity for any species. Habitat improvement is the fundamental need in producing more wildlife.

Man's ecosystem is the entire earth. He must plan its use, protection, and renewal. For the support of all life, its natural processes of rejuvenation and replenishment must continue to operate. This is the great challenge of environmental deterioration.

Man's dependence on living things is a reality of survival. He must be willing to share the earth with other forms of life. Their right to exist should be an acknowledged ethic.

Environmental fitness may be judged by the welfare of many creatures. Regional declines of wildlife indicate maladjustment. They bespeak the need for identification of causes and remedial action.

Governmental or professional responsibility in resource management carries a paramount obligation to the general public interest.

In many useful combinations, soils, waters, vegetation, and animal life are renewable re-

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Photo By Leonard Lee Rue III

A guiding principle in wildlife work is that each living thing has a place in a self-maintaining community of plants as well as animals. Such a community, with its site and climate, is called an ecosystem. Meateaters control rodents like white-footed mouse, at left. Control of insects is up to birds, like mocker, at right. Man, who is capable of adjusting his influence within the biosphere, can take a share, as in commercial fishing, below, as he protects nature's balance.

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sources—natural wealth and durable systems that can be preserved and improved through a knowledge of life processes. We regard the use of a renewable resource as optimal when it yields improving productivity for the future.

Wildlife Uses and Values

There are satisfactions in human life that have been taken for granted and poorly appraised. Freely enjoyed benefits of the natural environment are notable in this respect. Historically, and particularly among people least familiar with it, wildlife has been an idle cause, easily downgraded or ignored.

The future of such viewpoints is uncertain. People will continue to concentrate in cities. The lives of many will be adjusted to artificial surroundings. Will an increasing proportion of them be deprived of nature-oriented interests? Or will the complexity of their lives cause a turning to outdoor pursuits?

This committee proposes that wildlife has an important place in the kind of living standard Americans should strive to preserve. Its values are of several kinds, and their social significance should grow in times ahead.

Living environment

Surveys indicate that bird watchers and nature photographers are about as numerous as hunters, and they spend more time afield. Memberships in nature and conservation organizations continue to increase. Environmental interest is at an all-time high and growing. As the ideas of beautification and open space get more attention, the wildlife of urban areas has greater importance for its environmental and casual uses.

Since early in the century, professionals have recognized that the esthetic, "non-consumptive" enjoyment of wildlife in the out-of-doors is by far the greatest value of this resource. There are creature inhabitants in dooryards, urban greenbelts, farms, and hinterlands, and in every kind of water area. They lend essential character to our human inhabitants. This universal worth defies measurement.

Similarly incalculable, and even more basic, is wildlife's biological role. Every organism of the community has a function that affects all the others. Often we see specific interactions in terms of human interest, such as the abatement of insect pests by songbirds or the suppression of crop-damaging rodents by predators.

But more subtle processes are at work. Many kinds of organisms help maintain the living system of the soil. Animals distribute seeds and do the thinning and disturbing that many kinds of plants require. Meat-eaters bring the benefits of population control to their prey, and especially prevent destruction of the vegetation food supply.

These relationships are implicit in the survival of ecosystems. They are intrinsic environmental values that benefit every citizen.

On public lands and waters of every type, wildlife is being used throughout the year by people with many interests. Often license money and taxes on firearms, fishing tackle, and other equipment are the only source of funds for purchase and management. As an outgrowth, state administrative agencies have been oriented mainly toward service to those

Photo By Wallace Hughes

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who support their programs. Frequently, non-game species have had only incidental attention.

A new and encouraging trend is in progress. Game and fish agencies are getting broader responsibilities as wildlife agencies. Ways are being found to supplement their license-based funding through special taxes and appropriations representing contributions of the general public. The urban dweller should expect that substantial amounts of these funds will be spent on the species that help bring open spaces to life in our areas of high human density. This is the pattern an enlarged program of public wildlife services can be expected to follow in the future.

Field sports

Since primitive times, certain animal species have been important to outdoorsmen for fishing and hunting. Such pursuits still provide subsistence to a few native Americans, but for the bulk of the population they represent recreation. The eating of fish and game is the final act in savoring an outdoor experience.

These uses of waters and land continue to grow, as surveys by the Fish and Wildlife Service show. The survey of 1970 indicated that people who fish outnumber those who hunt by well over 2 to 1. In the United States there were 36 million who participated "substantially" in one or both activities, approximately 18 percent of the total population.

The rate of increase in fishing and hunting may well level off in decades ahead as a result of several factors:

Continued urbanization of the population . . .

The ever-greater difficulty of finding open waters and lands . . .

A growing scarcity of high-quality sport . . .

The concentration of fishermen and hunters . . .

Increasing interest in other forms of recreation . . .

In economic terms, fishermen and hunters contribute substantial support to outdoor recreation

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Photo By Lovett Williams

Photo By Ross Parsons

Americans who fish outnumber those who hunt by well over 2 to 1, yet both of these traditional forms of recreation may level off in rate of increase in future years, due in part to continuing urbanization and greater difficulty in finding open lands and waters and truly high quality sport. Sport fishermen and hunters consider the eating of fish and game the final act in relishing an outdoor experience. They give willingly to the financial support of nation's wildlife management efforts, local, state and national. They give for international management too.

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industries and to public management agencies. Their expenditures in the field during 1970 were more than $7 billion. Their federal excise taxes totalled nearly $47 million and their state license fees $192 million. As a taxpayer, the sportsman also has his share in all general levies for conservation and management. We endorse license fees adequate to provide for quality programs of fishing and hunting under conditions that protect the many other outdoor interests of the public.

Commercial uses

The harvesting of some kinds of wildlife for the market has continued since earliest times. Today our chief concerns in this field are (1) to eliminate commercial uses of endangered species, and (2) regulate appropriate commercial harvests to assure a sustained yield and maintenance of the resource.

An annual cropping of wild furs was once the primary industry of North America. That has undergone a long decline accelerated by the development of artificial substitutes. In addition, an ethic is developing against the wearing of wild furs. The beaver, mainstay of that early fur trade, was nearly wiped out in much of its range. It has now been widely restored by good management in states and provinces. Two oceanic species—the northern fur seal and sea otter—were literally rescued from extinction by timely international agreements and protection.

Major problems are posed by the existence of a world market, as witnessed recently in the case of novelty furs. In particular, heavy inroads have been made on many species of cats, especially in tropical countries. Under authority of the Endangered Species Act of 1969, the United States banned importation, or sale on domestic market, of wildlife threatened with extinction. We anticipate a further strengthening of this legislation, but it exemplifies the action individual nations can take while effective world conventions are being sought.

The most significant industry now supported by the direct marketing of wild creatures is the commercial fishery. Its past history has been marked by the failure of responsible agencies to set and enforce harvest limits within the recovery capacity of fish populations. The result has been depletion or loss of important biological and economic resources.

In Canada and the United States, fishery research biologists have established a substantial fund of management information. This will continue, and in decades to come, important sport and commercial fisheries will be restored.

Today's major issue is, again, an international problem. It concerns the right of nations to control the fisheries on their adjacent continental shelves. Foreign fleets, without incentives for moderation, are over-exploiting stocks of fish on both coasts of North America. We subscribe in principle to a resolution of the American Fisheries Society. This called for a major extension of the zone of national jurisdiction to make possible scientifically controlled cropping of fish and other seafood resources. This protection of local industries will create incentives for intensive management. Mariculture is a promising new industry with great potential for the production of shrimp and pompano in particular.

We must recognize, in addition, the world-wide plight of many kinds of whales. Here, international control of the harvest is urgently needed and much in question. The protection and rational management of living things in international waters requires a responsible world commission. Unlimited demands for food and the continual development of more efficient harvest gear have the potential for irreversible damage. It could include not only exterminations, but major changes in the life support systems of the oceans.

Of the many uses of wildlife, those producing profits to industry and monetary gain for individuals are the most difficult to control. Where a commercial harvest is allowed, two rules of management apply: Regulations must be scientific and impartial. They must be rigidly enforced, both in the field and by the courts.

Survival: The Great Priority

As stated previously, we anticipate a continuing increase of human population and inroads on resources. The problems of endangered species will become more critical as such conditions develop.

Present expedients to protect and restore our jeopardized wildlife are inadequate—a result of fragmented jurisdictions. A succession of clear and interlocking responsibilities should be established for such species from local, through state or provincial, to federal, and international levels.

This committee urges that a new world-wide perspective be promoted by the nations of North America. It would recognize that all peoples have a common concern for the survival of plants and animals still existing on earth. We regard this as a feature of the right-to-live concept already advanced. In a utilitarian sense, the preservation of species leaves options open for generations to come, who may find unpredictable uses for many organisms.

Various kinds of international negotiations are in progress to facilitate cooperative wildlife management. These efforts should be extended to include world-wide conventions on threatened species, wherever they may be. An international custody is needed now and in the future for living things that decline from any cause to the point where extermination is possible.

This would have value of a particular kind in the United States. The federal government has received jurisdiction over many species of birds and certain marine mammals through the treaty-making powers of the President. This authority, which is restrictive upon that of states, implements treaties with Canada, Mexico, and Japan. Whether or not it is acquired in this way, a federal sharing of responsibility is needed to assure improved measures for the restoration of diminished "resident" species covered only by state laws. ●

Photo By Gene Smith

Fish Pond Practices

By **JOE BLANCHARD, Biologist**
Fish Management

Florida Dept. of Commerce Photo

What Is A Fish Pond?

A FISH POND can be any size body of water from ½-acre to over 150 acres. It will support anywhere from 40 to over 400 pounds of fish per acre, depending on habitat, water quality, and the owner's desire.

Why Have a Fish Pond?

A fish pond can be a valuable source of recreation —fishing, swimming, boating, and many other water-related activities. It may serve as a land conservation measure and as a water storage area in a crop irrigation system. In addition to providing fish for food, it can provide a cash income to the owner by leasing out or selling hunting and fishing rights. Since sport fishing is now big business in Florida, a well-managed fish pond is part of good business for any landowner.

Who Can Build a Fish Pond?

Anybody who owns or leases property that has a suitable site for one. When contemplating building a pond, you should seek assistance from the Soil Conservation Service through your Soil Conservation District, or from an experienced private engineer. Whichever you consult, follow his advice!

Is the Pond Site Important?

It is most important! Careful consideration must be given to the selection of a site for your pond. The cost of construction and maintenance, and the usefulness and productivity of the pond, depend on its location. A good, manageable pond must have an adequate water supply, but it should not have too much water flowing through it. A good rule of thumb in selecting the site is to have 10 acres or less of drainage area to each surface acre of pond water.

How Deep Should the Pond Be?

For highest fish production and the least amount of maintenance, the pond should have a minimum depth of two feet at the shoreline, with a gentle slope down to six or seven feet maximum depth in the middle. Ponds with a large part of the water area seven to 20 feet deep do not produce a corre-

Photo By Gene Smith

The bluegill, left, a native panfish, is a favorite sport and table species. It's commonly used in stocking ponds—in proper balance with bass, shown above, which feed upon small bream. With too many bluegills present, their average size isn't good, and they don't interest the anglers.

spondingly higher yield of fish. Very shallow ponds, with depths of less than five feet, soon become nothing more than weed ponds.

How Can I Be Sure I Have Desirable Habitat?

All brush and trees do not need to be removed from the site. In fact, these afford shade and concealment for the fish, and provide a place for attachment of aquatic insects. In the northern part of Florida, soils and waters tend to be acid. Nearly all fish reproduce and grow better in alkaline waters, so before construction is complete, contact your county agent and have your soil and water checked. If his tests indicate a pH of less than 6, add 1,000 pounds of agricultural lime per acre to the bottom. It can be spread or placed in piles along the edges.

How Should a Pond Be Stocked?

If a pond is to provide good fishing and maximum fish production, it should be free of all fish before it is stocked. The fish should come from a state, federal, or reliable commercial hatchery, and be stocked in correct numbers. All old ponds (those holding water a year or more) and some new ones should either be drained or chemically treated to kill all existing fish. The most suitable fish for stocking in ponds are largemouth black bass, redear sunfish (shellcracker), bluegill (bream) and channel catfish. The Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission raises all but channel catfish in its hatcheries. Catfish can be obtained from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service through the Soil Conservation Service, or from any number of private commercial hatcheries that specialize in producing channel catfish fingerlings for stocking purposes.

How Many Fish Should Be Stocked?

The number stocked is based on the amount of surface water of the pond, and its fertility. Your regional fisheries biologist, employed by the Game & Fish Commission, will be happy to consult with you concerning the numbers of fish to be stocked in your pond. Never attempt to "help" stock your pond with fish you have caught, or to apply to several agencies for fish for stocking. Such practices can seriously damage your pond.

When to Stock a Pond?

Because of the spawning habits and climate differences within Florida, the time to stock is best left to the biologist who is familiar with your part of the state. Bluegills are usually stocked in the fall and bass the following spring. The bluegill's diet consists primarily of insects, and they can live in a pond without other fish. If allowed exclusive use of a pond, however, the bluegills soon become overpopulated and stunted for lack of food. Therefore,

(Continued on next page)

Two prime considerations in selecting a pond site are water supply—quality and quantity; and the watershed acreage—in relation to the proposed area of the pond surface. In final decision, take an engineer's advice as to whether you should or shouldn't build the pond.

Photo By Morrie Naggiar

Ponds which lack enough natural nutrients can be boosted into high-yield production by adding fertilizer, left. Stocking rate is figured accordingly, since a pond that is fertilized can support a lot more fish than one which isn't. Consult a biologist and follow the program all the way through once it's begun; it avoids later problems.

Photo By Bill Hansen

(Continued from preceding page)

bass are placed in the pond to help control the bream. The small bass at first live off insects, but after reaching a length of several inches they begin to eat the offspring of the bream that were stocked the previous fall.

Can a Pond Be Overstocked?

Yes, it can. One of the most popular misconceptions about fish ponds is that placing vast numbers of fish in them will provide better fishing. This is the exact opposite of the truth. If too many fish are stocked, or if the fish population becomes overcrowded (out of balance), the food supply will be depleted in a short time and the fish will not reach adequate size. Fishing success will then drop off. Likewise, if too few fish are stocked, a great number of offspring will survive as a group. This large group will grow until the available food supply is depleted, which usually results in an overabundance of fish that fail to reach harvestable size.

When Should Fishing Begin?

After the bass have spawned, which is normally one year after they were stocked. This assures proper control of the bluegills. The pond should then be fished regularly so as to remove surplus fish and allow other fish to grow. During the first year of fishing, bass should be removed sparingly, however, as their presence is insurance against overcrowding by the bream. Channel catfish generally do not reproduce in ponds, so when the original stocking has been about two-thirds removed, additional catfish may be added. These must be 10 to 12 inches long when stocked to avoid being eaten by the bass.

Should You Fertilize a Fish Pond?

Photo By Art Runnels

Many ponds receive sufficient nutrients to be naturally fertile, so no additional fertilizing is necessary. However, ponds that do not receive such nutrients will often produce many more pounds of fish per acre when properly fertilized. This practice should be discussed with the biologist prior to stocking.

Why Fertilize a Fish Pond?

Because, as stated, the ability of the pond to produce fish is directly related to the fertility of the water, and fertilizer also controls underwater plants by shading them out.

Consider very carefully *before stocking* whether you wish to fertilize your pond or not, as this will help determine the stocking rate. Should you begin to fertilize and later drop the program, you will most certainly damage your fish pond. It is far better to stock for an unfertilized pond and then pick up the fertilization program.

There is another option. If your pond is small and you visit it daily, you might consider feeding your fish instead of fertilizing. Any commercial fish food will do, and the fish will show a more rapid rate of growth.

How Does Fertilizer Produce Better Fishing?

The fertilizer is dissolved in the water and the nutrients therefrom cause a growth of microscopic plants called plankton, which, in turn, provide food for tiny animals. Plankton will color the water a dark green, thus cutting out the sunlight necessary for the growth of water plants and moss.

What Amount Should Be Used?

Commercial fish pond fertilizers are now readily available and should be the only ones used if the pond is also to be utilized for swimming. Organic fertilizers such as manure can be used but have a very high bacterial count. The pond needs certain amounts of the nutrients nitrogen, phosphate, and potash for best results. The formula which has proven best is 20-20-5. This formula is 100% water soluble; however, it may be necessary to buy another formula and adjust it. Normally, 40 pounds of 20-20-5 per surface acre is sufficient for each application. If you lime your pond, or if it receives nutrients through runoff from fertilized pastures or groves, it may not require fertilizer.

When to Fertilize?

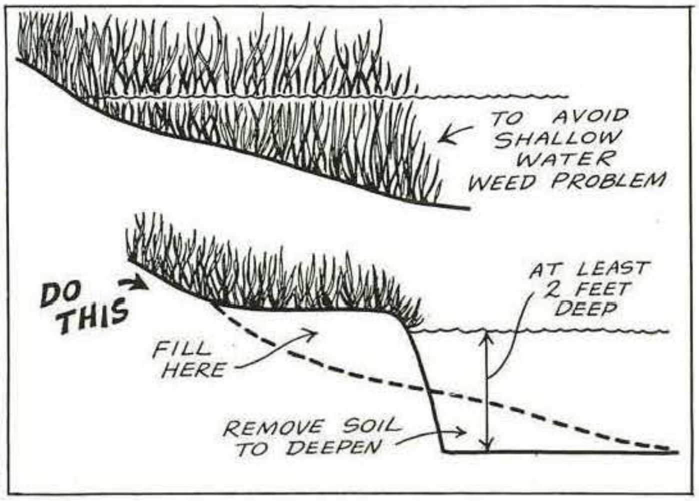
The first application of fertilizer should be made during the spring when the water temperature has reached 60 degrees F. Within a few days after the application, the water will become green or brownish-green due to the growth of plankton. If the water fails to change color, an additional application should be made in 10 days. In certain naturally dark-stained waters it may be hard to distinguish this color change. Subsequent applications of fertilizer should be made whenever the water becomes clear enough for you to see your hand when it is submerged 18 inches in the water. This usually requires application every three to five weeks. The program should be continued until the water temperature drops below 60 degrees F. in the fall.

How to Fertilize?

Fertilizer can be broadcast from the bank or poured from a boat. Sacks of fertilizer can be placed on submerged platforms, from which it will be distributed gradually by wind and wave action.

What's the Danger of Not Following Directions?

The greatest danger of an incomplete fertilization program is that the fish population will most certainly be thrown out of balance. Adding too much fertilizer can be equally harmful by indirectly causing the removal of oxygen from the water during the night and during prolonged periods of cloudy days. As a result, the fish may die for lack of oxygen. Sunlight promotes the growth of all plants (through the process of photosynthesis), so it follows that sunlight is necessary for the growth of plankton. When plankton becomes very thick due to overfertilization, several days of cloudiness may result in the die-off of large quantities of plankton. When this happens, the process of decay removes oxygen from the water.



Pond edges should be deepened to avoid waterweed problems.

What About Water Levels?

Constant water levels often lead to pond problems. By fluctuating the water levels, fish are stimulated to bite better, and conditions of the pond bottom are vastly improved. Disease organisms and undesirable aquatic vegetation can both be controlled in this manner. The biologist can recommend the best times for this procedure.

Are All Waterweeds Undesirable?

No, a certain amount of waterweeds is beneficial to fish production in that they provide habitat for fish food organisms and shade for fish during hot summer days. It is only when weeds become too numerous that they hamper fishing and contribute to overpopulation of bluegills by providing hiding places for them, making them unavailable as forage for the bass. Generally, when one-third or more of the pond surface becomes weed infested, chemical control must be used.

How to Control Waterweeds?

1. Eliminate shallow edges and marshy conditions; deepen the edges of the pond to at least two feet.

2. Fertilize enough to shade the pond bottom.

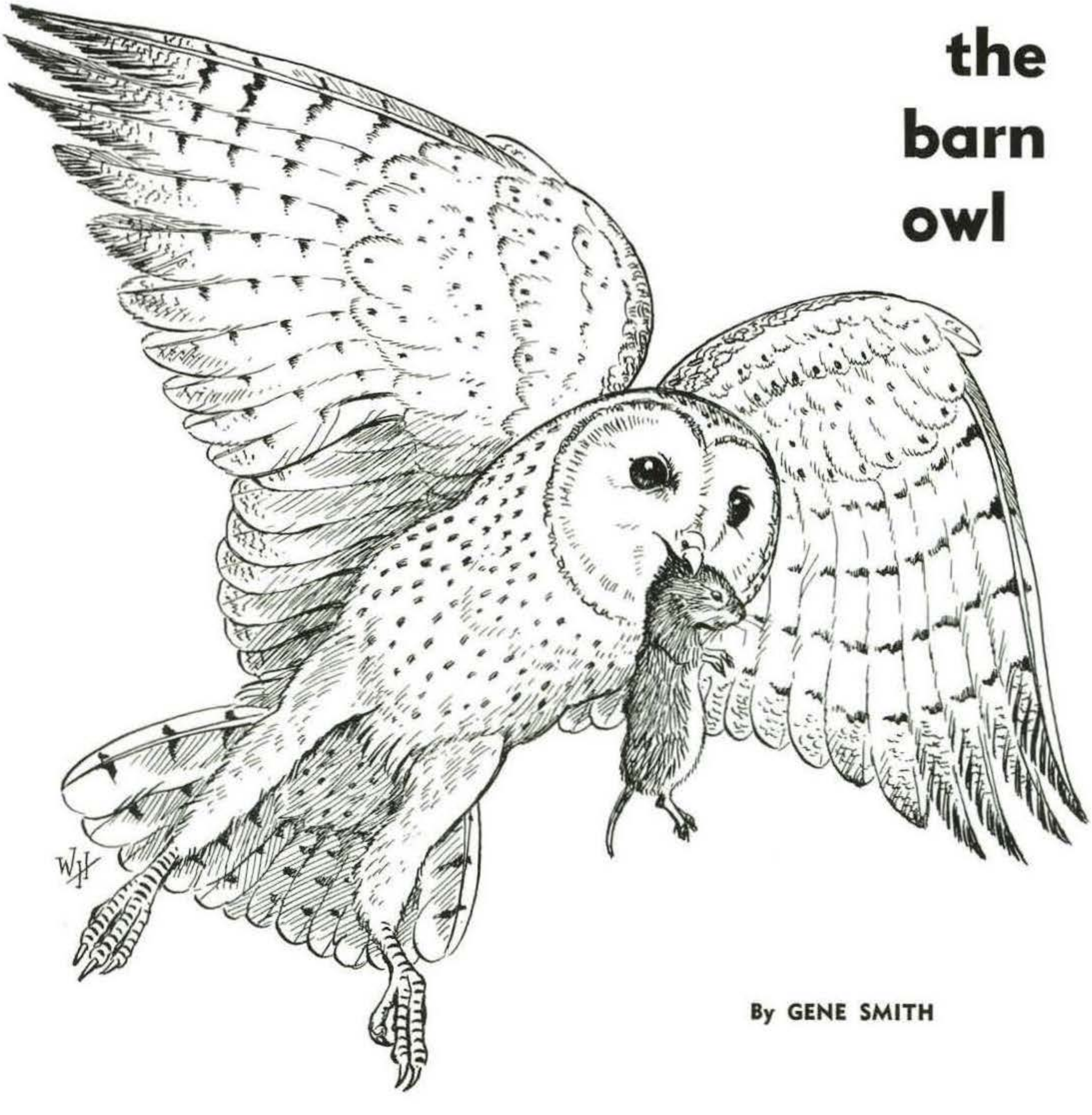
3. Mow around pond edges when needed.

4. Keep organic matter out of the pond to prevent the formation of pond scum.

5. Utilize water level drawdown during the winter.

6. If waterweeds still become a problem, consult with a biologist on how best to control them. ●

the barn owl



By GENE SMITH

IN APPEARANCE, the barn owl is the most unbirdlike of North American birds. Yet the habits of this trusting, curious, and extremely beneficial fellow are typical of this family of flying mousetraps—the mysterious "birds of night," the supposed "snatchers of souls," the innocent owls.

Old "monkeyface," the barn owl, has an age-old aversion to bright lights. He's a master predator that does his thing during the hours of darkness, then seeks the seclusion of some lofty, sheltered roost in which to drowse away the day. His prey therefore consists almost exclusively of such small creatures as mice, rats, and, occasionally, moles, bats, birds, and bugs that also happen to get out and about at night.

Its frequent occupation of barns gave this quaint owl its common name, but the fact is it nests and roosts in tree hollows if they're available, and in caves and holes in the ground if it has to.

The barn owl's quizzical, two-eyed stare, its rather elongate, heart-shaped face, its longish legs and manlike stance, its pale coloration, and an eerie, discordant scream combine to lend an air of spookiness to this bird, the sexes of which look alike. Add to these characteristics the barn owl's noiseless, floppy flight, and the image of some weird, winged wayfarer from the nether region is complete.

Indeed, barn owls have been the "ghosts" in many a "haunted" house, for their peculiar fluttery nighttime comings and goings from deserted, or half-deserted, dwellings might suggest to even the nerviest sojourner there some apparition from the spirit world.

But owls are only owls in spite of the fact that they have been prominently cast as hex symbols and ill omens in literature, art, and folklore throughout recorded human history. All owls are to be appreciated and protected, never feared or molested.

The barn owl, in its several forms, is one of the few birds with nearly worldwide distribution. It is found on every continent and on most of the large islands, in the temperate zones. *Tyto alba*, the only species of barn owl in North America, is a breeding bird in practically the entire "lower 48." It makes short local migrations in the northern and central states in order to escape the worst of the winter weather, for without accessible food supplies, it dies.

In Florida, it's found statewide and is a common year-round resident, although this owl is infrequently observed unless a person is looking for it in just the right places.

Barn owls may take over a squirrel's den or a woodpecker's old home, enlarge it by tearing away rotten wood with their powerful, four-toed feet, and settle down to homemaking. In the absence of a suitable tree cavity, or perhaps simply because they prefer it, a pair of barn owls may establish residence in a steeple, shed, silo, hayloft, warehouse, or any similar structure, where they may raise a family year after year, virtually under the noses of human neighbors, yet remain undetected.

Wherever the nesting site, barn owls build little or no nest. Five to eight eggs, dead white in color, are laid on a bare surface. But there have been cases where so many rolled away that up to 10 and 11 eggs were deposited in all before a clutch was incubated. Most often the male barn owl remains in the vicinity of his mate during the 32 to 34 days incubation, occasionally bringing her a mouse in recognition of her devotion to duty. (The female leaves the nest for short periods to feed, however.)

The homely, hissing young are covered with white fluff, as are owlets of every species, and they have prodigious appetites. Both adult birds are kept busy through the night, every night, feeding their offspring. Soon, the ill-tempered, ill-mannered young outweigh their parents. Shortly before they are fledged, however—at seven or eight weeks old—they experience a marked weight loss despite their food intake, and the immature barn owls approach the dimensions of adults: 18 to 21 inches in length, with a wingspread of some 43 inches. (They're slightly smaller than great horned and barred owls, but larger than burrowing and screech owls. All five are common in Florida.)

The barn owl's funny face is useful as well as whimsically designed. These birds are blessed with keen hearing, and their facial disk serves as a sort of dish antenna that catches the faint squeaks and rustling noises made by mice and other animals scurrying through the grass below the barn owls as they fly from perch to perch in search of food.

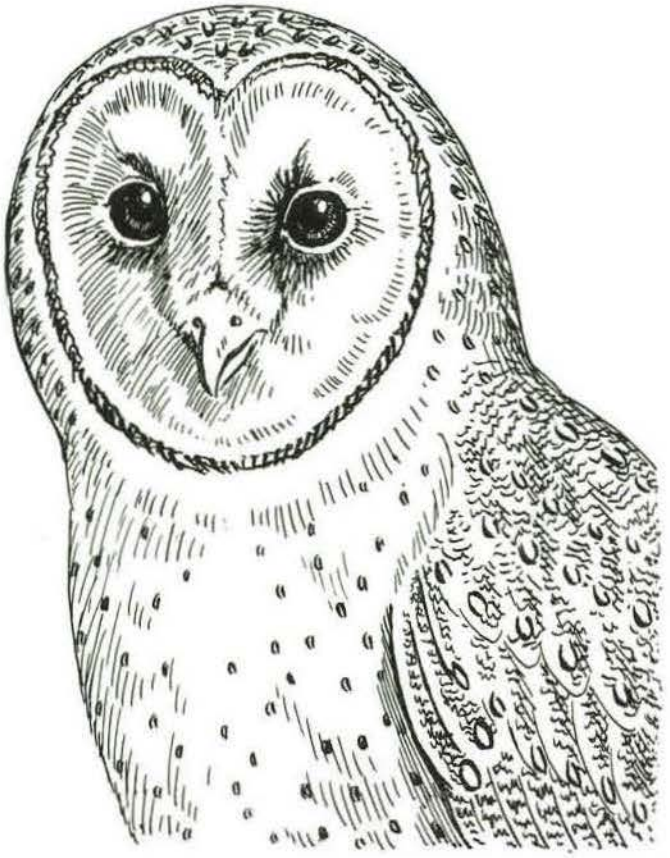
It's to the owl family's credit that its various members haven't always been cast as portents of evil, as in Will Shakespeare's plays. Angus Cameron's delightful essay "Man and Owl," in AUDUBON, November 1971, reveals that in some cultures the owl has also been the hero; a symbol used to *avert* bad luck.

The displaying of an owl's likeness supposedly struck fear in the evil spirit presumed to be presenting, or about to present, a threat of some kind. For example, the Chinese built owl ornaments into the gables of their houses to protect them from fire, the owl being, to them, a symbol of thunder and lightning. Similarly, the Romans displayed owlish designs about their dwellings to ward off the evil eye, Cameron wrote.

Those practices should have worked at least as well as the many old-time folk remedies using owl flesh, feathers, and eggs. Owl broth was apparently an old standby for a number of children's ailments, and owl's feet or hearts were "prescribed" for such diverse problems as gout, heart disease, and failing eyesight.

Nourishing? Sure. Stimulating? Perhaps. But hardly therapeutic, wouldn't you agree? ●

Drawings By Wallace Hughes



Fish Management Notes

BECAUSE THE LARGEMOUTH bass failed to spawn this spring, Hurricane Lake Fish Management Area, in Okaloosa County, will remain closed to fishing until further notice, according to John W. Woods, chief of the Fisheries Division, Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee.

The 350-acre lake, built in 1971, was to have opened to public fishing in June.

"Our biologists' spring fish population samples indicated no bass reproduction whatsoever," said Woods, "and, in fact, the year-old fish, which normally would have spawned, appeared to be sexually immature."

Regional biologists John Crew and Charles Knight, of DeFuniak Springs, reported a substantial population of panfish and channel catfish of harvestable size, but recommended against opening the lake because of the condition of the bass present and their vulnerability to removal by the opening day crowds of anglers, to the detriment of the fish population balance.

In view of the peculiar fish management problem, supplemental stocking of Hurricane Lake with bass appears to be feasible and "should compensate for the lack of reproduction and result in better fishing in the long run," says Crew, who speculates that "the high level acid conditions which persisted in this new lake for some time may have contributed to the suppression of the bass population, and their failure to spawn this year."

Hurricane Lake is located approximately 25 miles northwest of Crestview, in the Blackwater River State Forest.

THE CONTINUING saga of men against birds in defense of fish reveals still more trial and error methods are being employed by Morrie Naggiar and his crew at the Richloam Fish Hatchery, in Sumter County, to frighten away fisheating feathered friends from the hatchery holding ponds.

"Noisy but effective under specific conditions were cherry bombs on a fuse rope, carbide cannon, and Teleshot aerial bombs," reports the hatchery superintendent. "Flashing metallic discs on lines stretched across the ponds were effective in discouraging osprey inroads on white bass brood stock, and flashing lights and time-fused cherry bombs were effective in discouraging depredations by night prowlers on fish made vulnerable by pond drawdown," he concludes.

Naggiar, whose family residence is adjacent to the ponds, did not reveal how or when they get any sleep.

PROGRESS ON A NUMBER of management projects was recently reported by Everglades Region's Dr. Cobia Goforth, regional biologist:

"Time was spent this month converting shell rock pits owned by Palm Beach County into fishing lakes. Nine sites were inspected to establish working priorities and formulate lake designs. Present plans call for modifying certain ponds to be used specifically for catfish ponds. The county's engineering department has agreed to submit to the board of county commissioners for budget approval a request for $80,000 to $100,000 to get the project started. The work will be extended over the next few years—possibly five—until the nine areas have been completed."

Goforth reported a similar project on borrow pits in the Lake Park Marsh, owned by the City of West Palm Beach.

"Again," he stated, "one pond will be used as a catfish pond."

On other fronts, the biologist said, "Two fish ponds in the J. W. Corbett Wildlife Management Area were renovated for future stocking. Spot rotenone fish samples were taken in the Ft. Pierce Savanna Fish Management Area, as well as in the fishing pond at the Everglades Youth Camp. Controlled burning was carried out on a marsh in the youth camp pond—to retard vegetative succession." (Personnel of the Commission's Game Management Division assisted with the burning operation.)

"Work continued on plans for dredging muck from Lake Osborne, and the marsh restoration project (in Palm Beach County). Permit applications have been submitted by the county to the Trustees of the Internal Improvement Trust Fund, in Tallahassee. Hopefully, a county-owned dredge will be placed in the lake in approximately one month," Goforth's report concluded.

FOR THE FIRST time since 1969, Richloam Fish Hatchery failed to produce a substantial crop of striped bass," says Lake Management and Research Project Leader Forrest Ware, of Lakeland. "Out of an estimated three-quarter million fry successfully hatched and stocked into rearing ponds, a yield of 36,000 striper fingerlings was obtained."

Besides inexplicable losses from some ponds in which fingerlings were observed a few days prior to draining, but which failed to yield any fish upon draining, there were substantial losses in the fry culture stage this year. The symptom of "lockjaw," in which the fishes' mouths locked in the open position, causing their deaths eventually, was responsible for the loss of approximately a million stripers, Ware reports.

On the bright side, Blackwater Hatchery, in northwest Florida, successfully produced 49,000 fingerling stripers from some 300,000 fry released into two rearing ponds, an excellent survival rate. ●

Magic Circle

the simple principle behind aperture-type gun sights can make quick alignment and aiming easy even for the beginner, with practice

By EDMUND McLAURIN

Although riflemen generally seem to prefer scope sights, metallic sight combinations continue to be popular, and for good reason.

A carefully selected front sight and adjustable rear peep sight combination is hard to beat for hunting at short and medium ranges. Even in serious target shooting competition against scope sights, the right metallic sights can hold their own.

Years ago, when I was active in the competitive tournament circuit, many of the "any sight" matches were won by shooters using metallic combinations. Some of the smallest 10-shot groups I ever shot at 100 and 200 yards were made with rifles equipped with metallic sights.

The secret of success with metallics is using the right size aperture, or peep hole, in the rear sight for your eyesight and for shooting conditions, along with the right kind and size of front sight. The two sights, with your aiming eye, must work as a team, each contributing to accurate aim.

Keep in mind that a front sight, like a scope sight's aiming reticule, is an objective sight. You must impose it on a target or on the game hunted.

For serious competitive target shooting by a person with reasonably good eyesight, a hooded, aperture-type front sight such as the Lyman 77, Redfield International, Savage No. 6522-1, the old Redfield 73, and the Vaver will prove better all-around performers than unhooded blade types.

With the aperture-type front sight, the condition of one's eyes does not materially affect shooting, if a sharp front sight outline can be realized. It is easier to "ring" a bullseye with an aperture of proper size than it is to accurately align a blade or post sight at the bottom of a bullseye for repeated shots. For this reason alone, scores will be much more uniform when using an aperture-type front sight.

Also, tired eyes require more light under the aiming bull than fresh ones. This explains why, when using a blade front sight for target shooting, your groups (strings of five or more shots fired at one bullseye) will tend to form lower on the target when you near the end of a 40-shot match.

But successful use of an aperture-type front sight depends greatly on matching aperture size with the diameter of bullseye fired on, and range lighting conditions—plus use of the correct size peep hole in the rear sight. Generally, shooters will get good results with a .111" size aperture insert in front sight when firing on standard 50- and 100-yard target bullseyes in good light. The correct peep sight aiming hole would be about .060" in diameter. Individual differences in eyesight and in range lighting conditions may require slight aperture size changes, in either front or rear sight, or both, but the sizes given will be correct for most shooters firing on standard 50- and 100-yard range bullseyes.

Once the correct combination of front sight aperture and rear peep hole is determined, stick to the combination.

Athough fine for unhurried target work, a hooded front sight is not much good for quick shooting in brush. Fortunately, many hooded-type front sights come with removable hoods.

The well-known Patridge style front sight, a rectangular blade with a vertical back surface, was designed by E. E. Patridge, a famous pistol shooter of the late '90's. It was used in combination with an open rear sight shaped like a square U. It immediately became popular, and is used to this day.

In using the combination, the top of the blade front sight is aligned even with the top of the rear sight, with blade centered in the square notch and showing equal amounts of light on either side. The target is seen sitting on top of the properly aligned blade front sight.

An advantage of a post front sight for hunting is that the shooter, in utilizing the flat top for precise alignment, is able to see his game target above it, and better follow movement.

A post front sight becomes a liability if a shooter has uncorrected astigmatic error in vertical areas of the image he sees. Also, a shooter past 40, with aging vision, will likely find a post front sight difficult to see with acuity.

Probably the closest to ideal as a rifle front sight for hunting is the Redfield "Sourdough" model. The "Sourdough" combines the desirable parallel sides of the Patridge-style front sight with a modified upper portion that features a sloping gold square bead insert. Its width is .070".

For hunting, the sight shows up well under all conditions. If there is enough light to see a front sight, one can see a "Sourdough."

(*Continued on next page*)

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Smoked black, the "Sourdough" becomes an excellent medium range target-shooting sight.

In purchasing *any* replacement front sight, be sure it is of proper type and height for your particular firearm. In combination with an adjustable rear peep sight (substituted for original factory open sight) a higher front sight may be needed than that originally fitted to the rifle.

If your choice is a blade-type front sight, be sure the blade portion is wide enough to be easily seen and quickly caught by the aiming eye.

Some shooters go to the extreme and try to use a very narrow, knifelike blade front sight, on the theory that more precise alignment can be had, but the Lyman people, who make sights up in Middlefield, Connecticut, will tell you the effect is just the opposite. In dim light, a too narrow blade sight will have a tendency to fade out. Actually, it is far easier to align a medium or wide blade sight than a very narrow one.

Many shooters prefer a bead-type front sight. Their claim is that when using a bead front sight, all they have to do is put the bead on what they want to hit.

But a bead front sight should never be of such size, in relation to target size, that it tends to completely blot out or cover up a considerable portion of the game animal or bullseye fired on. A 3/32" diameter bead front sight will almost completely blot out a buck's shoulder at 100 yards, with rifle sighted to hit close to point of aim.

With the front sight bead covering so much target area, it is easy to make a sight alignment error and overshoot.

Also, for those users who prefer to "shoot off the top of the bead" by using tiptop aligned on target (so that intended hitting point is clearly seen above the top of the front sight), there is the possibility that the bead sight may tend, by visualized error, to shoot away from the light in the bright sun.

For best results, a front sight, whether bead or blade, should be nonreflective. That's why in bright sunlight many users of bead sights temporarily blacken them in the smoke of a candle that burns a home-concocted mixture of candle wax and crushed mothballs. (But careful with the heat; bead front sights are usually made of plastic, genuine ivory, or metal alloys colored gold or silver. Ivory will break or chip in hard field use. Those of metal and plastic are far more durable, except that plastic will melt in a hurry if a flame is brought too close.)

Very popular is the Williams bead sight, available in white and gold color, and in diameter choice of 1/16" or 3/32". A bead 1/16" in size naturally blots out less of the target area, but may be difficult for some eyes to see distinctly.

There is leeway for considerable experimentation in determining the visibility of different colors of front sights. You can coat a shiny metal bead sight with red lacquer or nail polish, or apply a tiny drop of white cellulose paint to achieve a white bead effect.

A bead sight is usually not much good for conventional bullseye shooting. Simply, it is more difficult to align two round objects on top of each other than it is to set, say, a round bullseye on top of a flat-topped post sight, or "ring" a bull with an encircling black outline.

Since the aiming eye is automatically attracted to the center of the rear sight's peep hole (where the light is strongest), the shooter is helped from the start of aiming. He needs only to bring the front sight and his target into proper alignment. With practice, sighting can be done with almost split-second speed and great accuracy.

Many first-time users of peep sights complain that the ring of light seen through the rear sight appears blurred around the edges—but that's the way things should be. Also, most first-time users conclude that to get the best accuracy they need a dime-size aperture disk with a tiny center peep hole. It's a false conclusion, especially for hunting. The screw-in disk itself should be of such small diameter that it does not obscure vision as one takes aim, and the disk's inner hole should be large enough that the eye instantly finds it and the front sight and the target beyond.

For serious, slow-fire target shooting, and for sighting-in of a hunting rifle, I use .060" and .070" rear peep holes, depending on range light. But for actual hunting use I use only large .093" and .125" sizes, incorporated in 3/8" or 1/4" diameter sight disks—if I use an aperture disk at all.

Some shooters place their aiming eye very close to the rear sight peep hole, to better see what lies beyond. That's correct! The rear sight peep hole can be compared to a hole in a boarded-up construction project; the closer you get your eye to the hole, the better you will see what is on the other side.

In using a rear peep sight, your primary concern should be to look *through* the rear sight's peep hole and concentrate on aligning the front sight and the target.

You can use the best front sight made, but it won't do you much good if you cannot see it clearly, or if the receiver sight with which it is used either does not match it or is of poor quality.

Solution to the first problem is to have regular eye examinations, preferably by an ophthalmologist. You want the best professional examination and optical prescription obtainable, if you require glasses.

The second problem is easily solved by using the correct model of a well-made micrometer click receiver peep sight. I can heartily recommend the Lyman 48 and Williams "Foolproof" models. Of the two, I prefer to use the Williams because its design is such that there are no adjusting knobs to hamper quick sighting.

Besides the "Foolproof," the Williams firm makes the compact, detachable "Guide" receiver peep sight for rifles that have factory-grooved receivers or an attached auxiliary base. The sight is amazingly efficient, yet small and streamlined. The "Guide" is a fast sight to use and constitutes an ideal peep sight for the hunter who wants to change from metallic sights to scope, using the same grooved base for both.

Many front sights are made with bases that dovetail into a slot factory machined in the rifle barrel. The bases are slightly wedge-shaped to achieve tight slot fit. The sight is driven *into* the receiving slot from right to left (muzzle pointing away from you) and *removed* by tapping out (using a brass driving rod) from left to right.

Some factory installed sights are fitted very tightly in their slots and may require several smart hammer blows against the driving rod to unseat them. Similarly, replacement sights often come a little large. These must be judiciously filed down on the left side to start them easily into the barrel slot while maintaining the wedge shape needed to assure increasing tightness as the new sight base is driven into position.

To avoid possibly springing or bending the rifle barrel, pad it with leather or heavy cloth and insert it into a bench vise. Close the vise on the muzzle end of the barrel just below the sight. This will reduce the possibility of damaging the barrel as the old sight is driven out and a new one seated. (Even better, use a mechanical front sight pusher made by Williams Gun Sight Company. The front sight removal and installation tool is well worth its nominal cost.)

If the dovetail of a replacement sight proves to be loose in the barrel slot when trial fitted, tightening can be achieved by peening down the edges of the barrel slot. Usually, only slight peening is needed. Peening makes for a neater finished job than the use of shims or center punch.

Rifles are often seen with a blade or bead front sight sandwiched between thin metal "ears" and held in place with a stud-pin. Driving out the holding pin will permit removal of the old sight. With new sight positioned, the pin is replaced. An improvement is to thread the original stud hole for a very small Allen head screw.

You can get front sights, either bead or blade, with the sight made right into an attachable barrel ramp. Better, however, are combinations of separately installed ramp and front sight. This permits later changing of front sight without having to remove the ramp.

Gunsmiths of yesteryear frequently fashioned blade sights from brass keys, carefully filing the sight blades to shape, proper height and thickness. The idea can be used when circumstances call for emergency replacement of a broken or lost front sight. Objectionable metal shine can be overcome simply by smoking or painting the sight a dull black.

Where a broken or lost rifle or shotgun front sight bead must be replaced and another is not immediately available, replacement beads can easily be made from a glob of silver solder or a tiny piece of drill rod, or from a piece of ivory or red plastic cut from the handle of an old toothbrush.

The silver solder replacement type of bead is self-adhering, and those made from drill rod or plastic can be both friction-fitted and epoxied into the front sight stem. Optionally, the new bead either can be made round or square-shaped like the insert incorporated in the Redfield "Sourdough" front sight.

In initial testing of newly installed, unadjusted rifle sights, many shooters fire their first shots over hunting ranges. That's a mistake. Many first fired shots often don't hit the paper target at all at long ranges, unless the rifle has previously been bore-sighted or collimated.

For first shots directed at a paper target, get up close—2½ yards when using metallic sight combinations; 25 yards if you're zeroing a new scope—so that all shots register *somewhere* on target paper. From registered hits, it is easy to figure sight corrections needed. The cardinal sight adjusting rule is to move metallic rear sight in the direction you want bullets to hit. Make similar corrections in the elevation and windage adjustments of a scope sight, housed in separate turrets in conventional models.

In changing from factory open sights to a combination or rear peep and blade or bead front sight, a shooter test firing often finds that, in combination with the original factory front sight, the newly installed rear peep cannot be given sufficient lowered elevation. In such instances, a higher front sight is called for—how much higher, depending on the amount of bullet impact error existing at target, at 100 yards, in relation to aiming point and the distance between the rear and front sights.

Seems complicated, but isn't! Simply measure inches of too high bullet impact on target at 100 yards, even with rear peep sight in lowest position. Next, measure the distance between rear and front sights. Match the figures with those on a sight guide chart, as furnished by Lyman and other gunsight makers, to find out exactly how much higher the required front sight replacement should be.

Few hunters really understand sight selection for their specific field needs. Those that do obtain correct sights don't always know how to go about achieving precise adjustment. Expert assistance is often needed.

Shooting clubs in Florida—and elsewhere—can render timely public service by setting aside and publicizing a weekend prior to hunting season when hunters can bring rifles to local ranges for sighting-in assistance. ●

1973 Hunting Season Information 1974

Northwest Region

(Jefferson County westward, inclusive)

Deer: November 10 through January 20.

Turkey: November 10 through January 20 (Gobblers only).

Quail and Squirrel: November 10 through March 3.

Northeast, Central, South and Everglades Regions

Deer:

November 10 through January 6, except—

In DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties—November 10 through 25 and December 8 through 30.

No open season in the Florida Keys of Monroe County.

Turkey:

November 10 through January 6, except—

In DeSoto, Hardee, Manatee and Sarasota counties—November 10 through 25 and December 8 through 30.

No fall open season in Alachua and Suwannee counties; or in that portion of Columbia County south of State Road 240 and west of State Road 47.

No fall open season in that portion of the Everglades Region lying south of Alligator Alley (State Road 84).

Quail and Squirrel:

November 10 through February 24.

No open season on fox squirrel in Lee, Hendry, Palm Beach, Monroe, Collier, Dade and Broward counties.

Statewide

Wild Hog:

November 10 through January 6.

In Palm Beach and Alachua counties, and in that portion of Levy County lying between the Suwannee and Withlacoochee rivers, generally bounded (north to south) by U.S. 27A, SR 337, lower SR 121, and U.S. 19-98, and including those lands lying north and east of U.S. 27A in R16E and belonging to International Paper Company.

In that portion of Collier, Dade and Monroe counties west of Levee 28, south of Alligator Alley (SR 84), north of the Everglades National Park boundary, and east of SR 29.

Bear:

Bear may be taken in Baker or Columbia counties, and on Tyndall Air Force Base in Bay County, during the established open season for taking deer; and by special permit on designated wildlife management areas.

Turkey Gobbler: Spring Season

That portion of the state lying south of State Road 50: March 9 through March 24.

That portion of the state lying north of State Road 50: March 23 through April 7.

Shooting Hours—Resident Game

One-half hour before sunrise to one-half hour after sunset; except the Spring Turkey Season when shooting hours will be one-half hour before sunrise to 12-noon.

Archery Season (statewide)

September 8 through September 30

Legal Game—Deer of either sex (except fawn), bear (in Baker or Columbia counties, and on Tyndall AFB in Bay County), turkey, quail, squirrel, rabbit, and wild hog.

No open season in Broward of Dade counties; in that portion of Palm Beach County south of SR 80; in that portion of Hendry County east of L1 and L2 levees; or in Collier or Monroe counties south of U.S. Highway 41 (hunting permitted in the tract lying between U.S. 41 and Loop Road, SR 94).

The possession or use of firearms while hunting with bow and arrow during the archery season is prohibited. The taking of deer from airboats is prohibited during the archery season. Crossbows are prohibited. The use of any unleashed hunting dog by any person hunting with bow and arrow during the archery season is prohibited. Persons holding a valid archery permit in addition to a regular hunting license may hunt on designated wildlife management areas and on open lands during the established archery season.

Florida Hunting Licenses

Exempt—Residents 65 years of age and over and all children under 15.

Issued from County Tax Collector offices, and authorized subagents. Costs include issuing fees.

Servicemen, stationed in Florida, are considered residents of Florida insofar as licenses to hunt and fish are considered.

Resident, Annual

Series AK—Hunting-Fishing Combination, Statewide	**$10.50**
Series K—State	**7.50**
Series I—Home County	**2.00**
Series J—Other than Home County	**4.50**

Non-Resident

Series L—State, Annual	**26.50**
Series M—State, 10-day Continuous	**11.50**
Series M1—County, Annual, Owners of and paying taxes on 3000 acres land	**11.50**

Resident or Non-Resident, Annual

Series H—For hunting on licensed private hunting preserves only	**5.50**
Archery Season Permit	**5.00**

Issued from Office of Commission, Tallahassee

Series Y—Guide, required for guiding hunting parties	**10.00**
Alien Hunting	**50.00**

Bag Limits

(for turkey and deer sex evidence requirements, see General Regulations Summary)

	Daily Bag	Season Bag	Possession Limit
White-tailed Deer	1	2	2
Turkey—Fall	1	2	2
Spring	1	2	2
Squirrel, Gray	10		20
Squirrel, Fox	2		4
Quail	12		24
Rabbit	10		20
Bear	1	1	1
Wild Hog	1	2	2

For that BiG ONE that didn't get away!
GOTCHA!
WHO CAUGHT WHO?

ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
SPECIES

LARGEMOUTH BASS	8 pounds or larger
CHAIN PICKEREL	4 pounds or larger
BLUEGILL (BREAM)	1½ pounds or larger
SHELLCRACKER	2 pounds or larger
BLACK CRAPPIE	2 pounds or larger
RED BREAST	1 pound or larger

All fish must be taken from the fresh waters of the state of Florida, as defined by the Game and Fresh Water Fish Commission. Fish must be caught on conventional fishing tackle, with artificial or live bait, in the presence of at least one witness.

The catch must be weighed and recorded at a fishing camp or tackle store within the state by the owner, manager, or an authorized agent of the respective establishment.

FLORIDA WILDLIFE'S
FISHING CITATION

is available without charge, to any and all subscribers to Florida Wildlife Magazine, and their immediate families, who catch any of the fresh-water game fish of the prescribed species and size requirements. Citation, showing recorded date of the catch, will be mailed to the applicant upon receipt of the following application form that has been properly filled out and signed.

Only fishing citation applications received within 90 days from date of catch will be honored.

APPLICATION FOR FLORIDA WILDLIFE FISHING CITATION

The Editor, FLORIDA WILDLIFE Date__________
Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission, Tallahassee, Fla.

Please send me the Florida Wildlife Fishing Citation with the inscribed data listed below:

Name (please print)__________

Address __________

City__________ State__________ Zip No.__________

Species__________ Weight__________ Length__________

Type of Tackle__________

Bait or Lure Used__________

Where Caught__________ in__________ County

Date Caught__________ Catch Witnessed By__________

Registered, Weighed By__________ At__________

Signature of Applicant__________

CUT OUT AND SAVE THIS APPLICATION BLANK

Black & Yellow Orb Garden Spider

Photo By Leonard Lee Rue III

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Game & Fresh Water Fish Commission
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